

San Antonio, TX - Congressman Charles Gonzalez (D-TX), today discussed health care reform legislation with hundreds of community members at a Health Care Town Hall at the Edgewood Independent School District Theatre of Performing Arts. He joined community members to explore the ins and outs of America's Affordable Health Choices Act, which will provide American families with stability and security, and the peace of mind knowing they will have access to affordable, quality health care.

"Today I heard from members of our community about the health care issues facing our nation," said Rep. Gonzalez. "I was pleased to see the large crowd of people that showed up to discuss our community's critical health care needs."

America's Affordable Health Choices Act will reform the current health insurance system to give those Americans who already have coverage more stability and security. It will put patients and doctors in charge of medical decisions, instead of insurance companies. The bill prevents insurance companies from denying coverage or charging more because of diabetes, heart disease or any other pre-existing conditions. It limits out-of-pocket expenses to make sure no American family risks bankruptcy or financial ruin because a loved one got sick.

"Without reform, the problem will only get worse," added Rep. Gonzalez. "Texas has among the highest rates of people without health insurance in the entire country."

With this legislation, those Americans who don't have insurance will now be able to choose a quality, affordable plan through the new health insurance exchange. The exchange will offer low group rates even for individual coverage and promote choice, competition and transparency. It will include a public option to compete on a level playing field with private insurers so that every American gets the quality care they need.

"The cost of providing medical care for the 47 million uninsured costs all American families \$1100 in their premiums every year. We must act now to expand coverage and give every American the choice of affordable, quality care," added Rep. Gonzalez

Our health insurance reform also helps seniors by beginning to close the Medicare Part D donut hole, lowering their prescription drug costs. It eliminates cost-sharing for preventive care and improves care by strengthening access to doctors. It also extends the solvency of Medicare.

"Every day 10,000 Americans lose their health insurance. If we don't act now, health care costs for the average family will increase \$1,800 every year, more middle class families will lose their insurance as costs rise and more Americans will face economic ruin," said Rep. Gonzalez. "Reforming the system now means we can save money, improve efficiency and eliminate waste and abuse."

